

Avon Hill Boundary Study
“Mission Survey” Preliminary Results
Summary Narrative as of January 10, 2006

Theresa has very kindly tabulated and put into an Excel spreadsheet the numerical results of the surveys received as of January 10, 2006 (36 individual survey forms so far out of a total of some 300+/- forms sent out). Open response comments have been consolidated in a Word document and arranged by comment type (very negative, negative, neutral, positive, very positive). While there is some interpretation in characterizing the open responses, it is useful to see how they range across the board.

Below are some narrative summaries based on the figures Theresa provided.

I. Expectations¹:

The first six questions in this section looked at the qualities of the District that were identified as important in the Purpose statement of the Avon Hill NCD order and sought property owners' responses on how important those qualities were to them. The seventh question looked at what types of alterations property owners believed would have the most impact and asked them to consider which types of alterations they believed were most important.

1. 19th and early 20th century residences of significant architectural quality: 94.1% of those responding ranked this Very Important; 5.9% as Somewhat Important. This was the category for which there was the greatest support and about which there was the greatest consensus: no respondents called this category Not Important. **Average= 2.9**

2. Cohesive pedestrian-oriented neighborhood of pleasant streetscapes with little auto traffic: This category ranked just below #1. and #3 as the most important categories: 79.4% ranked it Very Important, 14.7% Somewhat Important. There was less consensus on this category than on #1 or #3, as 5.9% found this category Not Important. **Average = 2.7**

3. Abundant, mature trees and plantings and vistas through to surrounding properties (“green space”): This category received the next strongest support, after #1, with 85.3% ranking it Very Important and 14.7% finding it Somewhat Important. There was clear consensus on this category as well, with no respondents ranking the category Not Important. **Average= 2.9**

4. National Register-listed properties of city-wide significance: There was a nearly even split on the importance of this category (44.1% Very Important, 41.2% Somewhat Important) and a good percentage who found this Not Important (14.7%). **Average = 2.3**

5. Diversity of architectural design: There was substantially divided support for the importance of this category, with 41.2% finding it Very Important, 35.3% Somewhat Important, and nearly a quarter of the respondents finding it Not Important (23.5%). **Average = 2.2**

¹ Note that the “Average” noted on the spreadsheet for each question in this section indicates how important that factor was to the respondent (3= Very important, 2= Somewhat important, 1= Not important)

6.Evolution of architectural design through later updating: There was consensus that this category was Not Important (40.6%), but opinion was divided overall with a third of the respondents indicating it was Somewhat Important (34.4%) and a quarter finding it Very Important (25%). **Average= 1.8**

Preliminary conclusions: In rank order, the respondents found the District's architecture and green space most important, followed by its pedestrian-orientation, its significant National Register properties, its diversity of design, and the evolution of that design through later alterations.

7.Potential impacts on the district's generously-sized lots and buildings of:
a. subdivision and new construction: 87.5% who answered this question found it Very Important, 9.4% Somewhat Important and only 3.1% Not Important
b. large additions and accessory buildings: 81.3% found this Very Important, 15.6% Somewhat Important and only 3.1% Not Important
c. small additions and accessory buildings: only 20.3% found this Very Important, with a third (37.5%) finding it Somewhat Important and a substantial (42.2%) finding it Not Important
d. lesser alterations, replacement windows, fences, front yard parking: less than a fifth of the respondents (17.1%) found this Very Important, with more than a third (36.8%) finding it Somewhat Important and almost half (46.1%) saying it was Not Important.

Preliminary conclusions: In rank order, the respondents found the impact of subdivision and new construction most important, followed by large additions, small additions, and lesser alterations.

II. Experiences:

Fewer respondents answered this section, which dealt particularly with individual contact with the District, either as an applicant or an abutter. The questions were posed in a yes or no format.

1.
 - a. over 90% had received notice of a meeting or hearing
 - b. 50% had attended a meeting or hearing
 - c. 32% had applied for approval of a project
2.
 - a. 45% said the Commission mission and standards were clear;
55% said they were not
 - b. 31% said the Commission applied its standards consistently;
62% said they did not
 - c. 41% said the decision was based on the standards; 47% said it was not
 - d. 71% said it had been clear whether the review was binding or advisory;
23% said it had not
 - e. 33% said a clear distinction had been made for National Register properties; 50% said it had not (17% did not respond)

- f. 71% said efforts were made to encourage appropriate alternatives; 18% said they were not (12% did not respond)
- g. 89% said the public had sufficient opportunity to comment; 10% said they did not
- h. 58% said the Commission conducted a fair and civil hearing; 42% said it had not

III. Results:

This section sought to determine how/if the purposes of the District were being met.

- a. the District has preserved, conserved and protected neighborhood character: 68% yes; 23% no
- b. the District has accommodated compatible changes to the neighborhood's distinctive character: 53% yes; 27% no
- c. the District has provided a positive forum for neighborhood dialog: 55% yes; 29% no
- d. the District has provided technical assistance on conservation and preservation: 34% yes; 6% no (55% don't know)

IV. Open Response:

There were 25 responses with comments. Of these, 24% were neutral, 40% negative or very negative, and 38% positive or very positive.